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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A system, comprising:

a video layer of a program guide for an interactive information distribution system, said interactive information distribution system having provider equipment and subscriber equipment, said video layer having at least one user selectable object associated with selectable video content sent from said provider equipment to said subscriber equipment, said video layer sent from said provider equipment to said subscriber equipment, said video layer containing a video region and a graphical region, said video region containing a video barker having associated audio, said graphical region containing a list of program titles; and

a graphics layer of said program guide, where said graphics layer selectively overlays and provides emphasis and de-emphasis of said at least one user-selectable object in said video layer, said program guide being generated in a central location of said information distribution system, said graphics layer providing emphasis and de-emphasis by masking or revealing an object in the video layer.

2-6. (Cancelled)

7. (Currently amended) The system of claim 16 wherein, to perform said masking and revealing, said graphics layer selectively changes an opacity of a region of said graphics layer.

8. (Previously presented) The system of claim 1 wherein said video layer and graphics layer are contained in an applet.

9. (Previously presented) The system of claim 1 wherein an identity of an emphasized object is controlled by a viewer.

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10. (Previously presented) The system of claim 1 wherein said emphasized object is user-selectable.

11. (Previously presented) The system of claim 1 wherein said emphasized object is highlighted.

12. (Previously presented) The system of claim 1 wherein said video layer contains a plurality of objects and said graphics layer emphasizes a select number of said objects and de-emphasizes a remainder of said objects.

13. (Previously presented) The system of claim 12 wherein said objects are a list of program titles.

14. (Previously presented) The system of claim 1 wherein said graphics layer is prestored in a user terminal.

15. (Previously presented) The system of claim 1 wherein said graphics layer is transmitted to a user terminal.

16. (Currently amended) A method, comprising:
generating, within service provider equipment of an information distribution system, a bitstream representing a program guide having a video layer and a graphics layer disposed over said video layer;
communicating said bitstream to subscriber equipment;
converting, within said subscriber equipment, said bitstream into a display of said program guide; ~~and~~
selectively providing at least one of emphasis and de-emphasis of at least one user-selectable object in said video layer that is associated with selectable video content sent from said provider equipment using said graphics layer; and producing a mask/reveal overlay within said subscriber equipment.

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17. (Cancelled)

18. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1617 wherein producing said mask/reveal overlay includes extracting said mask/reveal overlay from said graphics layer in said bitstream.

19. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1617 wherein said mask/reveal overlay is dynamically updated using information from said graphics layer that is extracted from said bitstream.

20. (Previously presented) The method of claim 16 further comprising identifying objects in said display through manipulation of a user input device.

21. (Previously presented) The method of claim 20 wherein identifying said objects includes emphasizing one of said objects.

22. (Previously presented) The method of claim 21 further comprising selecting said emphasized object to initiate a new context.

23. (Original) The method of claim 22 wherein said new context is a preview video.

24. (Original) The method of claim 22 wherein said context is an advertisement video.

25. (Previously presented) The method of claim 16 further comprising extracting at least two different program guides from said bitstream.

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26. (Previously presented) The method of claim 25 wherein each of said different program guide has audio that is common to another of said different program guides.
27. (Previously presented) The method of claim 20 wherein identifying objects is preformed locally to said subscriber equipment.
28. (Previously presented) The method of claim 16 further comprising identifying an object and selecting said identified object to synchronously jump from broadcast mode to pointcast mode.
29. (Previously presented) The method of claim 28 further comprising returning to said broadcast mode when a pointcast transmission ends.
30. (Previously presented) The method of claim 22 wherein selecting said identified object causes said graphics layer to emphasize certain objects with respect to remaining objects.
31. (Previously presented) The method of claim 16 further comprising:
selecting said user-selectable object, when said user-selectable object is emphasized;
communicating the selection to said service provider equipment; and
sending, from said service provider equipment, a multi-media bitstream corresponding to said user-selectable object.
32. (Previously presented) The method of claim 31 wherein said multi-media bitstream is a video-on-demand movie.
33. (Previously presented) The method of claim 16 further comprising:

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selecting said user-selectable object, when said user-selectable object is emphasized;

causing an event in said service provider equipment, where said event is one or more of tuning to an analog channel, tuning to a digital channel or launching a resident capability in said service provider equipment.

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